

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 001218

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV
CINCPAC FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/04/2012

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: RUMORED PROMOTIONS IN THE SPDC

Classified By: COM CARMEN M. MARTINEZ FOR REASON 1.5(D).

1. (C) Summary: News services are reporting that the State Peace and Development Council has promoted some of its top generals. Although the SPDC has not officially announced the promotions, rumors in Rangoon appear to indicate that at least four of the top Generals may have been promoted. If true, the promotions would be a further consolidation of power by Senior General Than Shwe, ensuring control over his top echelons. It is too early to judge whether this consolidation of power would indicate that the Senior General is positioning for continued military control of the country or if he may be setting the stage for a transition to civilian government. End Summary.

2. (C) Information provided by Embassy contacts appears to support reports by Kyodo News and the BBC that the SPDC has promoted some of its top brass. Although the SPDC has not announced any promotions, rumors in Rangoon indicate that at least four of the senior brass may have been promoted; General Maung Aye has been promoted to Deputy Senior General, Lt. General Khin Nyunt has been promoted to General, and two Major Generals, Thura Shwe Mann and Kyaw Win, have been promoted to Lt. Generals. If these promotions are confirmed, they will indicate a consolidation of power by Senior General Than Shwe. Promoting Maung Aye to Deputy Senior General (a position that has never existed before) will end speculation on possible jockeying for position between he and Lt. General Khin Nyunt. Promoting Khin Nyunt to General, reportedly with duties as "Military Advisor," will move him up from his traditional role as head of the country's infamous Military Intelligence. This may help make him more palatable with the international community as a regime interlocutor and put to rest doubts about any lingering allegiance to his mentor, ex-strongman General Ne Win. Kyaw Win will presumably take up Khin Nyunt's old position as intelligence chief and Thura Shwe Mann, who is now Chief of Staff - Army, may move up into Maung Aye's position of Deputy Commander in Chief of Defense Services. Both of these Generals are stalwart Than Shwe supporters. Their positions just below Maung Aye and Khin Nyunt will keep the latter focused on supporting the Senior General. If there are any weaknesses, they will know they could easily be replaced.

Comment

3. (C) Again these promotions are still just rumors at this point. If they are verified, they are clearly an effort by Senior General Than Shwe to consolidate his position and control. It is still too early to judge, however, whether these moves would indicate his desire to perpetuate military control of the country or perhaps move slowly toward some form of civilian control. There is speculation that the SPDC will have to do something soon to mitigate international criticism that it has stalled on progress toward dialogue with the NLD. This consolidation may be part of a strategy to defray this criticism. That strategy, if it exists, is not yet clear to Rangoon observers.
Martinez